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1 Introduction

Since the foundation of the European Union (EU), particular emphasis has been placed on intra-European mobility.[1] The free movement of persons granted by European citizenship is one of the pillars of the EU. Endeavors to promote mobility within the EU originally reflected economic interests. The objectives now have broadened to include noneconomic aims, e.g., to enable inhabitants to learn about other European countries and to come into contact with its citizens. Several programs established by the European Commission to improve social integration (e.g., Erasmus student exchange program, Leonardo da Vinci) have further increased opportunities for EU citizens to meet and likewise have stimulated different forms of social exchange (Koikkalainen 2013, p. 87).

In this article, we address the question to what extent intra-European mobility fosters partnerships between Europeans from different countries. Romantic partnerships (and marriages in particular) are often regarded as the litmus test of social integration for the reason that they are among the closest personal relationships people have. Most likely they are intimate, exclusive and (intended to be) long lasting. Their impact is felt beyond the couple because they bring together the family and friends of both partners. Intra-European couples and their children also play a brokering role for further interethnic contact within the neighborhood community (Martinovic et al. 2009; Schaeffer 2013). As such, partnerships where both partners are from different countries often lead to other kinds of relationships between different nations, partly across borders. Against the backdrop of this assumption that intra-European spatial mobility generally can lead eventually to the formation of an integrated community of states (Deutsch et al. 1957; Fligstein 2008), intra-European partnerships can serve as a particularly meaningful indicator of the success of the European project.

Previous research has provided insights into the reasons why individuals in intra-European partnerships move abroad (Gaspar 2008, 2012); however, very little is known about the impact mobility has on the formation of these unions. Our paper helps to fill this gap by studying if and how previous individual mobility experiences influence one's choice for a foreign-born European partner rather than a native partner. For our analyses, we make use of recently gathered original data on European couples from the EUMARR project (2012). As the sample does not include single Europeans or non-European couples, we will not pronounce ourselves on the effect of mobility on other possible partnership outcomes.

[1] It is noteworthy that in discussions on free movement of EU citizens, the positively connoted term 'mobility' is often preferred over 'migration,' with the first also referring to a wider range of relocations including non-permanent types of migration such as seasonal work and cross-border commuting for employment (e.g., Favell 2008; Santacreu et al. 2009).

Our paper contributes to the understanding of these issues with regard to three European countries. In addition to two founding members of the EU, Belgium and the Netherlands, we have included Switzerland, which, while not an EU state, is nevertheless a part of the Schengen area. We believe that the described processes apply not only to EU but to European countries generally, especially if they are closely interwoven with the EU, as is the case for Switzerland (cf. Schroedter and Rössel 2014).[2] Mobility within Europe does not exclude non-EU members.

The article is structured as follows: We start with an overview of European mobility (Sect. 2) and European intermarriage (Sect. 3); then we sketch the most important theoretical approaches explaining partner choice and the formation of (binational) partnerships (Sect. 4). In Sect. 5, we develop our hypotheses with a focus on the impact of European mobility on the resulting types of partnerships. After describing our data and our methodological approach, we present the results of our analyses, which demonstrate that cultural background and mobility experiences during (early) adulthood do influence the chances of intermarriage. The main results are summarized and discussed in the final section.

2 European Mobility

The right of every EU citizen to move freely and reside anywhere within the European Union is one of the pillars on which the EU (and the European Single Market) is built. EU citizens can move for educational purposes, for employment, to follow their partner or to find a nice place to stay after retirement—without the need of a residence or work permit. From the early days, this right has served a mainly economical purpose: to keep a balance between supply and demand on the labor market, to improve innovation and exchange of knowledge, and to create sustainable growth and the like (European Commission 2010, p. 2; Koikkalainen 2013, p. 86ff.). The ability to recruit workers and employees from other EU member states has reduced the need to admit third-country immigrants from outside the EU to fill economic needs (Pascouau 2013).

The concept of a European citizenship (arts. 17–22 EC) was officially introduced after the Treaty of Maastricht (1992), giving mobility a broader meaning: Mobility became a way to create European citizens (Baldoni 2003, p. 9). Since then, many initiatives have been launched to encourage and support European mobility with the intention—beyond the desired economic advantage—of fostering cultural exchange and developing a European identity. Over the last decades, this has resulted in many programs often targeted at young people, such as Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Marie Curie scholarships, the student exchange programs Erasmus and Erasmus

[2] In that respect, a central point for our argumentation is the adoption of free movement for EU citizens in Switzerland, which has been in force since June 2002 (for more details cf. EDA 2014). This not only includes the freedom to move to and work in Switzerland (with only minor qualifications) but also easier access for those who commute across borders to work in Switzerland. In February 2014, a referendum of the Swiss electorate decided to restrict the freedom of movement also for EU citizens. The constitution demands that the referendum has to be implemented within three years (EDA 2014), but how it will be implemented has to be awaited.

Mundus, and the development of EURES, a European employment service. But still, especially within the current difficult economic context with very high unemployment rates in some member states, economic growth remains the central starting point in many European mobility discussions (European Commission 2010, p. 10).

EU citizens in the main appreciate and support the freedom to move within the Union. Data from the Standard Eurobarometer 80 (Autumn 2013) show that 57 % of all European citizens indicate that the free movement of people, goods and services within the EU is the most positive result of the European Union (European Commission 2013b, p. 38), confirming the results of earlier surveys (e.g., Eurobarometer 67, 2007). Moreover, the Special Eurobarometer 337 from 2010 (European Commission 2010) has shown that most of the resident population of the EU above age 15 are convinced that this mobility, indeed, contributes positively to European integration (60 %), the labor market (50 %) and the economy (47 %). 36 % of them also consider it good for families, whereas 29 % believe that it is bad for families (with 30 % being neutral) (European Commission 2010, p. 72).

Despite European policy encouraging intra-European mobility and its positive evaluation by most EU citizens, official statistics indicate that less than 3 % of all European citizens live outside their own country of birth (Benton and Petrovic 2012, p. 2; European Commission 2013a, p. 44; Recchi and Favell 2009, p. 2; Mau and Büttner 2010, p. 547). This number, however, should be seen in perspective. Because of the freedom to move, mobile Europeans are difficult to monitor administratively, given that official registration is not required for short stays in other EU member states. Therefore, many kinds of mobility such as cross-border commuting and working, training on the job and seasonal labor are underestimated in official statistics. Survey data from the Special Eurobarometer 337 of 2010 show that about 10 % of the EU member state residents over 15 have lived and worked abroad at some time in their lives, and 41 % answered that they had a friend or relative who has lived or worked in another country (European Commission 2010; Benton and Petrovic 2012). Admittedly, these numbers also include movement into non-EU countries. At any rate, Europeans represent only a minority of the total group of foreigners in many European countries: On average 38 % of all foreigners in the EU have European origins (Benton and Petrovic 2012, p. 2). Yet there are some exceptions, for example Belgium. But although the number of EU citizens residing long term in other EU countries are still low, they nevertheless have grown since 1985 in most EU member states (Mau and Büttner 2010, p. 547).

There is no real 'prototype' of the mobile European since the Europeans are very diverse with respect to their motives for migrating (e.g., labor, quality of life, retirement) as well as with respect to country of origin and destination (e.g., Recchi and Favell 2009, p. 3, please note that their results refer to Western Europeans). The research literature, however, indicates that international experience in the form of previous employment or training abroad increases the likelihood that they will consider moving abroad in the future (European Commission 2010, p. 53). Half of those who do migrate exhibit previous migration experience (Recchi and Favell 2009, p. 5). On the other hand, factors such as having children, having a partner,

being a member of a dual-earner household and owning a house inhibit mobility (Benton and Petrovic 2012, p. 11).

It has been demonstrated that, despite the dominance of economic objectives in intra-European mobility policy, family and love seem to be the most important motives for EU citizens to move within the European Union (30 %), closely followed by work (25 %) and quality of life (24 %) (Santacreu et al. 2009), although regional variation exists. Seven percent indicate 'study' as their main motive for migrating. Motives for moving also depend strongly on gender, reflecting traditional gender patterns: For men, work is the most important motive (33 % compared with 18 % among women); whereas for women, family/love gets the highest score ('following their partner': 37 % compared with 21 % among men) (Recchi and Favell 2009, p. 5). Discouraging effects are also apparent, mainly in regard to the individual's social life. 'Leaving home' is most often mentioned (39 %) as a reason not to move abroad for work; 27 % are concerned about imposing big changes on their families, while 21 % do not want to leave their friends behind (European Commission 2010, p. 111).

Another form of (short-term) intra-European mobility concerns tourism. Based on the Eurobarometer 392 that was carried out among EU member state residents in January 2014 (European Commission 2014), seven in ten European residents left their home for at least one night at least once in 2013. Travelers are found to be typically younger (age category 15–39), highly educated, employed and more often living in an urban environment. About 33 % of all European residents who went on a longer holiday (at least four nights) in 2013 did so to visit family, friends or relatives. A majority of those taking holidays went to destinations in their own country (57 %), but a large percentage (54 %) also went on holidays in another EU member state. The most popular EU holiday destinations in 2013 were Spain, France, Italy, Germany and Austria. About 26 % of the respondents made no overnight journeys abroad in 2013; financial restrictions were given as the main reason for not going on vacation, mentioned by 44 % of the respondents. Concerning the development of intra-European tourism, it has been reported that especially short-term stays, i.e., less than three days, have increased (Mau and Büttner 2010, p. 555).

In sum, we can conclude that the opportunities for Europeans to meet Europeans from other countries have increased over the last decades. Although permanent settlement in other European countries is still rather low, there are various possibilities for non-permanent movement (e.g., for vacation, business trips or seasonal employment) which are widely taken up by Europeans and for which a positive trend can be observed.

3 Partnerships Between Europeans

While the opportunities for EU citizens (or Europeans generally) to meet potential partners from other European countries have increased in the last decades, the changed opportunity structure has not resulted so far in a noticeable rise in intermarriages between European nationals (within the total group of marriages)

(Koelet et al. 2012). One explanation for this could be that many of the partnerships go unnoticed for the reason that official statistics generally relate to marriage records and do not monitor cohabiting couples. Because EU citizens do not need to marry in order to get a residence or work permit, they may be less prone to legalize their partnerships compared with couples involving a non-EU national. In Switzerland, for instance, we observe an increase in the latter type of couples over the last decades (Schroedter and Rössel 2014). Generalized trends for EU and non-EU cross-border[3] marriages (EU and non-EU), in addition, do not show a clear picture: Increasing, decreasing and stable trends in these marriages are apparent in different European countries (Lanzieri 2012). Even so, Lanzieri (2012, p. 116) concludes that as the size of the foreign community in a country plays an important role in intermarriages, expected population developments point to a possible increase in these marriages in Europe in the future. Several factors may nevertheless intervene, thus making any forecast uncertain.

Although the macro-approaches indicate that the effect of European mobility on European inter*marriage* statistics is (still) small or even nonexistent, the question remains how and to what extent individual mobility experiences affect individual partner choices and more specifically the choice of a foreign European partner versus a native partner. Does individual mobility create opportunities favoring European intermarriage, and/or does it help to accumulate capital necessary to engage in a relationship with a foreign European partner? Insight into this process is needed if we want to draw further conclusions regarding the future trends of European intermarriage. This is even more so as the macrostructure is not simply a given or stable entity but is affected by individual decisions (e.g., to move to a partner in another country). Thereby, the movement of individuals plays a role in recreating the structural opportunities within their social environment.

In the next section, we outline the theoretical background of this microanalysis, starting with a general theoretical framework on partner selection (opportunities, third parties and preferences). Our main focus is on the influence of intra-European mobility on the formation of intra-European couples (rather than native couples). However, the effect of mobility that we expect and will describe in more detail in the following often applies not only to intra-European couples in the European context but to the formation of binational partnerships in general.

4 Mobility and Partner Choice

In the sociological literature on (homogamous) partner choice, three main bundles of influencing factors have been identified: structural parameters of the marriage market, the role of third parties and individual preferences (Kalmijn 1998). At each of these levels, (European) mobility may influence partnership formation in various ways. In this section, we discuss the three bundles separately, followed in each case by an interpretation of these insights in relation to the impact of mobility.

[3] These are marriages between partners born in different countries.

4.1 Opportunities

The choice of a partner is strongly constrained by the opportunities to meet someone suitable. Important structural parameters for finding a partner from a specific social group are the size and the gender ratio of the group as well as its spatial concentration (Blau 1994; Blau and Schwartz 1984; Kalmijn 1998), not to forget the availability of single individuals who are interested in forming a partnership. Besides this, the individual's position within the social strata together with the social differentiation, heterogeneity and inequality of a population is also important (Blau 1994; Simmel 2009). Finally, it is essential that the individuals actually meet, i.e., that they frequent the same social spaces (Blau et al. 1982, p. 46ff; Blau and Schwartz 1984; Bozon and Héran 1989; Feld 1982; Kalmijn and Flap 2001). The 'foci of activity' (Feld 1981, 1982), such as schools, universities, workplaces, and neighborhoods, as well as associations and leisure facilities, often have a rather homogenous membership structure (e.g., in terms of education), which is only moderately influenced by the general population structure.

It is obvious that (European) mobility changes these structural parameters, by changing the 'usual' surrounding as well as the locality of an individual's marriage market, providing new opportunities for encounters. Mobile individuals enlarge or replace local marriage markets with 'new' potential partners they may not have otherwise met. The more often individuals move about and the longer they stay in other countries, the greater the number of opportunities to meet potential (foreign) partners.

In addition, processes of modernization and globalization are assumed to have extended the range of marriage markets in the last decades. This assumption rests on cheaper and faster modes of transportation, a better connectedness among different world regions, and last but not least the possibilities made available by the Internet. The latter made it more likely that individuals from different regions or countries can establish contact without actually having met before, dissolving barriers set by geographical space. Online forums and Internet dating websites make it easy to get to know people from other places. Moreover, the Internet facilitates staying in contact with someone living far away once two people have met in real life (e.g., on vacation). That combined with the cheaper modes of transportation means relationships may develop even across greater geographical distances. Additionally, Internet dating is known to bring together more 'unconventional' partnerships (e.g., Rosenfeld and Thomas 2012).

4.2 Third Parties

A second bundle of influencing factors which can be found at the group level is primarily related to social norms (Kalmijn 1998). Social norms can exert a strong—direct and indirect—influence on partner choice. Social norms of endogamy, i.e., the preference for members of one's own social group (e.g., religious or ethnic) over members of another, can directly impact relationship formation since it may restrict or reduce contact with members of other social groups. Norms operate indirectly in that they shape identification with one's own social group and the perception of

others as acceptable marriage candidates. Even if not internalized, social norms can exert significant power if violations are enforced and sanctioned by others—peers, friends, family or society. Accordingly, the broader and more diverse the social networks of individuals, the lesser the effect of social norms represented by only some interactants within the network.

In the case of European mobility, the European legal framework can be understood as a 'third party' facilitating access to and the availability of other European citizens as potential mates. The creation of European citizenship in Maastricht as a means to promote European identification (European Commission 1997) and the subsequent efforts of the EU both to stress the bonds between EU citizens and to define Europe in positive terms have, moreover, aimed to improve the relationships between citizens of different European countries. Both the necessity and the success of this European social integration goal have been fiercely debated (Greven 2000), but there is evidence that this policy has reinforced distinctions made between an own European in-group and a non-European out-group (Licata and Klein 2002).

4.3 Preferences

The third bundle of factors is located at the individual level. At the basis of *individual preferences in certain characteristics in a partner* lies the maximization of two universal goals: physical well-being and social well-being (Lindenberg 1989; Ormel et al. 1999). In modern societies, basic physical needs are mainly fulfilled by the accumulation of socioeconomic resources. As most individuals are interested in partners highly endowed with socioeconomic resources, while disapproving of individuals with less endowment in comparison with themselves, a similarity of partners in respect to socioeconomic resources is likely to result. Educational homogamy is a typical example, although choosing a partner with a similar level of education can also fulfill an emotional need as education often goes hand in hand with certain lifestyles, leisure preferences, values and worldviews. Behavioral confirmation in particular is more easily and cost-efficiently achieved in a social environment where the individual's attitudes, tastes and values are shared. The similarity of partners can thus be a mere by-product of the mechanisms of the marriage market (optimizing human and financial capital) but also the result of an individual preference for shared cultural experiences (shared cultural capital). Closely linked to cultural capital in shaping personal preferences for intermarriage is the role of linguistic capital. The process of relationship formation usually starts with an initial, rewarding interaction. In such cases, a common language (even if not spoken fluently) is often helpful. With respect to binational partnership formation, this means that individuals who either share the same mother tongue with their foreign counterparts or who speak the language in question have an advantage. The more (foreign) languages one speaks and the greater the ability to speak the respective languages, the easier it is to get into contact with other nationals and the greater the likelihood of this resulting in a fulfilling interaction.

Mobility experiences (e.g., longer stays abroad or shorter holiday trips abroad) can result in improved foreign language skills or raise interest in learning a new

language (Rössel and Schroedter 2014). They can, however, also work as a facilitating factor for intermarriages as they broaden the horizon of the mobile individual [much like education does (Hjerm 2001; Breugelmans 2004)], which often goes along with more openness and more open-mindedness toward new experiences, people and cultures. This in turn can make a partnership with someone of a different nationality more likely. Longer or extensive mobility experiences in childhood can already affect the young, fostering competencies for interacting with people from different cultures. In a qualitative study among international students, Carlson (2011) found a positive association between previous mobility experiences and stays abroad for study purposes. An international family background, international orientation and traveling—or what one of the interviewees called 'internationalness'—increased the odds of a study term abroad.

Murphy-Lejeune (2002) speaks in this context of 'mobility capital.' She defines mobility capital as 'a subcomponent of human capital, enabling individuals to enhance their skills because of richness of the international experience gained by living abroad' (Murphy-Lejeune 2002, p. 51). Those having acquired mobility capital can then be seen as a migratory elite, open to new cultural environments based on their previous mobility experiences or previous contact with other cultures. Kaufmann and his colleagues have coined the term 'motility' as the capacity to be mobile in geographical and social space (Kaufmann et al. 2004). Motility describes the individual's access to movement (i.e., different forms and degrees of mobility), the competences to use these movements and the appropriate mastering of these forms of movement in relation to own values. Hence, motility is also considered as a form of capital that can be used to acquire other types of capital and is thereby related to a new form of social inequality. Mau et al. (2008) further found in a quantitative study a positive association between border-crossing experiences and the development of 'cosmopolitan attitudes' of openness toward foreigners. Furthermore, mobile individuals were more likely to agree that foreigners would enrich the society. Weenink (2008) stresses the importance of the parents in passing on 'cosmopolitanism' and mobility capital to their children by their own mobility behavior and the choices and international ambitions they have for their children. In many cases, the educational choices they make for their children are crucial (Weenink 2008; Igarashi and Saito 2014).

In short, mobility provides individuals with mobility capital which can work as a facilitating factor for binational marriages through individual preferences: The experiences of mobility or traveling seem to be associated with more openness and interest in other cultures as well as a weakening of the assumed in-group preference. We assume that mobility fosters the latter, but the effect is not unidirectional. More interest in other cultures, for instance, will also make traveling more likely. Not least, preferences for certain characteristics in a partner can directly give rise to mobility.

5 Hypotheses

The theoretical framework of the previous section can be translated into a number of hypotheses which will then be tested in the empirical analysis. We focus mainly on

the effect of mobility, but start with a series of hypotheses derived from the relevant background variables discussed above.

Education: We expect education to be positively associated with the probability of an intra-European binational marriage (H_1). On the one hand, the assumption builds on individual preferences as the more highly educated are usually more open-minded regarding other cultures (cf., e.g., Rössel and Schroedter 2015 on cosmopolitan cultural consumption). Besides, people with higher educational degrees are assumed to experience less intellectual and psychological cost in adapting to new contexts (Braun and Recchi 2008, p. 77). For the highly educated, it might also be very important to find a partner with the same level of education. In order to find a homogamous partner in educational terms, other characteristics of the mate (e.g., his/her nationality) might become secondary. Schools, universities and work places are also very effective marriage markets.

Linguistic capital: Our general hypothesis is that linguistic capital increases the chance of a binational intra-European partnership since it may enable individuals to overcome language barriers in (initial) encounters (H_2) (on foreign languages as capital or facilitator of capitals cf., e.g., Díez Medrano 2014; Gerhards 2012; Weenink 2008). Foreign language skills enable verbal communication with people from other countries as a necessary precondition to the establishment of a partnership. In more detail, we expect that people who were brought up bilingual have a higher probability of a binational match (H_{2a}). Moreover, the more (foreign) languages one speaks, the more likely a binational partnership should be (H_{2b}). We also hypothesize that individuals who speak English have a greater propensity to have a binational partner (H_{2c}). English should serve as a kind of 'lingua franca' for the reason that an average of 51 % of all EU residents are able to speak it, 13 % as their native language and 38 % as a foreign language (European Commission 2012).

Mobility: Generally, we expect a positive effect of mobility (H_3). This is for various reasons as discussed in the theoretical part. On the one hand, we expect that mobility creates new opportunities to get to know people that one probably would not have met otherwise. This operates in geographical terms but also through preferences for certain cultural resources that go along with specific lifestyles and foci of activity. On the other hand, mobility experience should broaden the horizon and create more open-mindedness that should support the formation of binational partnerships. This is even more so as it is known that young people's identification with Europe is higher, the more European countries they have visited (Kuhn 2011; Roeder 2011; Rother and Nebe 2009; Spannring et al. 2008). Accordingly, other Europeans should be experienced as more familiar and might even be regarded as members of the same (in-)group of 'Europeans'. Although these mechanisms should apply to all mobility experiences, we expect them to be more effective, the longer the stays abroad have been and the greater the number of different European countries visited. Accordingly, we differentiate between effects of shorter visits/trips abroad and longer stays abroad, with the latter assumed to be more effective for binational partnership formation.

The following hypotheses apply to *short trips*: The higher the number of (different) European countries and continents visited in childhood, the higher is the probability of a binational partnership to another European (H_{3a}). This hypothesis

builds on childhood mobility experiences that could be understood as a form of socialization with regard to dealing with cultural diversity in general. The same should apply to general mobility experiences as an adult: The higher the number of (different) European countries and continents visited as an adult, the higher is the probability of a binational partnership to another European (H_{3b}). With respect to *longer stays abroad*, we assume that the higher the number of long stays abroad in European countries, the more likely is a binational partnership with a European (H_{3c}). Moreover, the reason for a long stay abroad should play a role, too. We expect long stays related to educational or occupational reasons especially to have a positive effect on the formation of binational partnerships since schools, universities and work places are known to be effective marriage markets (Kalmijn and Flap 2001) (H_{3d}).

Additionally, stressing the importance of mobility and its influence on the opportunity structure, we hypothesize that a European binational marriage is more likely if the couple has not met in the country of residence of the individual being considered (H_4). We further expect that a binational marriage is more likely if the partners meet on the Internet since the structural opportunities should not matter as much online as in real life (H_5). However, a positive correlation may as well result from individual preferences for a mate with characteristics that are not common in potential partners in the local marriage market (e.g., skin colors or more traditional gender roles). An overview of the expected effects is presented in Table 1.

6 Methods and Data

Our analysis is based on data from an online survey that was conducted in the context of the project 'Toward a European Society: Single Market, Binational Marriages, and Social Group Formation in Europe (EUMARR)' in 2012. We use survey data from five different cities in Belgium (Antwerp, Brussels), the Netherlands (Amsterdam, The Hague) and Switzerland (Zurich). The inquiry was

Table 1 Overview of expected effects

	Variable	Expected effect
H_1	Education	+
H_{2a}	Raised multilingual	+
H_{2b}	Number of foreign languages	+
H_{2c}	English	+
H_{3a}	Mobility diversity in short trips as a child	+
H_{3b}	Mobility diversity in short trips as an adult	+
H_{3c}	Number of long stays abroad	+
H_{3d}	Long stay abroad for educational or work-related reason	+
H_4	Met in country of residence	−
H_5	Couple met online	+

addressed to persons in mono- and binational partnerships (both marital and non-marital), defined by the (first) citizenship of both partners at the time of the survey. The sample included nationals from the respective countries and nationals from the EU-27 countries who were living together with their partner. The basic samples were drawn randomly from several predefined strata of people from the population register of the relevant city by the registration office.[4] Mono-national couples included only individuals holding the citizenship of the respective country (Belgian–Belgian in Belgium, Dutch–Dutch in the Netherlands and Swiss–Swiss in Switzerland). Binational couples included in each case a national of the respective country and a national from one of the EU-27 countries. Whereas in Switzerland the sample of EU-27 partners to Swiss is representative for Zurich, in Belgium the top five nationalities of EU-27 citizens married to natives (French, Dutch, Italian, German and Spanish) were sampled to limit the diversity in the sample, supplemented with binational couples including a Polish partner to ensure the inclusion of new EU-27 member state nationals. In the Netherlands, the four most frequent combinations were selected (German, British, Polish and Dutch) plus a group of mixed couples from diverse other EU-27 countries. In each couple, one of the partners was chosen at random. All selected individuals were contacted by mail. They were invited to participate in the online survey in at least two languages (Belgium: Dutch, French, English; the Netherlands: Dutch, English; Switzerland: English, German). The questionnaire of the survey could also be filled out in the respective languages. At increasing time intervals, reminders were sent to the sampled individuals. The final reminder included a questionnaire, which could be filled in by hand and returned free of charge. By following this procedure, response rates between 32 to 40 % were achieved in each country.[5]

Whereas the EUMARR sample differentiates between binational and mono-national couples based on nationality, in this paper we base our definition of intermarriage—or more precisely intra-European couples—on country of birth. This definition ensures that we concentrate on people in similar partnership constellations in each country, whereas a focus on the citizenship of the partners might have resulted in biased groups due to different naturalization policies in the respective countries. This comes at the expense of second generation migrants. However, our arguments on mobility and opportunity structures are especially relevant for predicting partnerships between two persons who have grown up in different countries.

We focus on the native-born respondents with either a native-born or a foreign-born European partner (EU-27)[6] in the EUMARR sample. Native-born respondents who are single or have a non-European partner were not included in the EUMARR study. It is thus important to bear in mind that we are studying the specific effect of international mobility on the formation of intra-European couples in comparison

[4] For more details on the respective surveys, see de Valk et al. (2013) for Belgium, Heering et al. (2013) for the Netherlands and Schroedter and Rössel (2013) for Switzerland.

[5] The overall response rates are 32.2 % for Belgium, 37.1 % for the Netherlands and 40.5 % for Switzerland.

[6] The vast majority of the foreign-born partners come from (other) EU-27 countries.

with native couples (see more on this in the discussion). As sampling procedures in the EUMARR project varied slightly between the countries, we restrict our analyses to those native-born respondents who belong to a couple where both partners are aged 30–45 and have provided valid information concerning their sex and country of birth. After these selections, the number of respondents in our harmonized dataset equals 1,782; 43 % of these native-born respondents are intermarried to a European partner (Table 2). The data used for the descriptive and explanatory tables are not weighted as population data for this specific group of natives, at least those in intra-European relationships, are not available.

Our control and independent variables include several individual characteristics as described in detail below. *Education* discerns between four categories: low, middle, high and very high. As the sample contains essentially highly educated people, low education relates to secondary degrees and less. Middle education represents higher educational degrees obtained outside of university, while high education relates to tertiary education. Individuals who possess very high education completed a PhD or equivalent degree.

Multilingual raised individuals indicate that they have been brought up speaking more than one language. Furthermore, we account for the *number of foreign languages fluently spoken* that were learned prior to the current partnership. The respondents were asked to indicate all languages—apart from their mother tongue—which they spoke at the time of the survey and whether they had learned to speak them before or after meeting their current partner.[7] The variable we use in the analyses also includes the second or third language indicated by respondents brought up multilingual when asked for their mother tongue. The number of foreign languages is restricted to four and more languages, since this was the maximum number of (foreign) languages that could be registered in some of the questionnaires. Moreover, we include *English language abilities* (learned prior to the couple's first meeting).

In the next step, we will describe the indicators we use for mobility capital. First, we look at short stays abroad. In the questionnaire, short stays were defined as those lasting at least one night away but not lasting longer than three months. We differentiate between mobility before the age of 16 and mobility from the age of 16 onwards until living with the current partner. In order to avoid problems raised by multicollinearity of the variables of interest, we decided to run cluster analyses for short-term mobility in childhood and adulthood. For the short stays in the childhood (until the age of 16), we did a two-step cluster analysis (with Log-likelihood as distance measure and BIC as clustering criterion) based on two variables: the *number of continents the respondent visited* and the *number of European countries visited*.[8] The continents are restricted to five, including Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Oceania. The numbers of European countries that have been visited are limited to 34. The first cluster analysis for short-term mobility in childhood resulted in three

[7] The question was followed by an annotation indicating that by 'speaking a language' we mean that one can have a long conversation with native speakers of that language.

[8] Originally, we also included the number of travels additionally to the diversity of travels, but this variable did not add to the quality of the clusters.

Table 2 Partner choice per country, percentages in row

Country and city/Natives with a…	Native-born partner	Foreign-born European partner	Total	*N*
Belgium				
Antwerp	43.0	57.0	100.0	193
Brussels	42.2	57.8	100.0	187
Total	42.6	57.4	100.0	380
Switzerland				
Zurich	69.7	30.3	100.0	953
The Netherlands				
Amsterdam	38.1	61.9	100.0	226
The Hague	45.6	54.4	100.0	223
Total	41.9	58.1	100.0	449
Total	56.9	43.1	100.0	
N	1,014	768		1,782

Source: Belgian, Dutch and Swiss EUMARR survey 2012

different categories: a category with individuals who had visited a limited number of European countries before their 16th birthday, those who had visited many European countries and the last category including individuals who had visited many European countries as well as many world regions. For the short stays abroad as an adult (age 16 until living with the current partner), an identical procedure was applied, resulting in three similar clusters: low mobility individuals, high mobility individuals mostly within Europe and high mobility individuals with many continents visited.

Additionally, we account for the *number of longer stays in European countries abroad before the first meeting* of the partner. Longer stays are all visits that lasted three months or more. As we have information on both the year of first meeting and the year and duration of stays, but not on the exact day and month of both events, we include all stays that started before or in the very year the partners met for the first time. In doing so, most of the stays that resulted from or in the course of the partnership formation should be excluded. A few respondents who indicated they had been on a longer stay abroad but did not specify the date of their stay were coded zero (not missing) for the reason that it was not clear whether their stay had been before or after the couple had met.

Our data also enable us to differentiate between motives for remaining abroad for longer periods. The reported motives are 'to be with the partner,' 'work,' 'school/study,' 'parental family's decision,' 'other family reasons' and 'other reasons.' Only the most common motives 'school' (17.0 %) and 'work' (7.2 %) are withheld; the other motives are referred to as 'other reasons.' Moreover, we account for the first meeting of the partners. On the one hand, respondents were asked whether they met online or in real life. On the other hand, they were asked to indicate if they first met their partner in the country of residence or abroad.

Furthermore, we control for the age and sex of the respondent as well as for the country where the survey was conducted (Belgium, Switzerland or the Netherlands)

Table 3 Variable descriptives for control and independent variables

	% (means*)	*N*
Country		
Belgium	21.3	380
The Netherlands	25.2	449
Switzerland	53.5	953
Age*	37.8	1,782
Gender		
Male	48.5	864
Female	51.5	918
Migration background		
No	74.4	1,325
Yes	25.7	457
Education		
Low	15.6	278
Middle	20.7	368
High	54.7	975
Highest	9.0	161
Languages		
Not raised multilingual	82.4	1,468
Raised multilingual	17.6	314
No. of foreign languages*	2.12	1,782
Short stays as child		
Few countries in Europe	39.4	702
Many countries, mainly Europe	22.8	406
Many countries and continents	37.8	674
Short stays as adult		
Few countries in Europe	24.4	434
Many countries, mainly Europe	31.3	558
Many countries and continents	44.3	790
Long stays abroad in Europe		
Not for work	92.8	1,653
For work	7.2	129
Not for educational reasons	83.1	1,480
For educational reasons	17.0	302
Not for other reasons	93.6	1,667
For other reasons	6.5	115
Meeting		
Not in country of residence	17.3	309
In country of residence	76.4	1,362
Online	6.2	111

Source: Belgian, Dutch and Swiss EUMARR survey 2012

* For metric variables the mean is presented

and migration background. *Migration background* is represented by having at least one parent born abroad. The parents of most of the (native-born) respondents with a migration background in our sample have their origin in Europe (83 %), mainly in countries that are members of the EU-27 (45 %). Less than 3 % of the cases were excluded due to one or more missing values in the covariates. An overview of the control and independent variable is presented in Table 3.

7 Empirical Results

We start the analyses with descriptive results referring to the mobility experiences of the native partner in our sample. Subsequently, the effect of mobility on intermarriage is tested in a multivariate model, controlling for the demographical and cultural background variables.

Table 4 presents the diversity of European countries visited during short stays abroad for intermarried and not intermarried natives in Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland. As mentioned in the methods sections, we differentiate short-term mobility before the age of 16 from short-term mobility after 16 but before the partnership. The descriptive results seem to point to the importance of short stay travels during adulthood for choosing a foreign partner. In all three surveyed countries, the diversity of visited European countries and continents after age 16 is higher for natives in an intermarriage than in a native relationship. For mobility as a child (before age 16), the differences between intermarried and native couples are much smaller and less clear.

In the next step, we look at longer stays in other European countries lasting three months and more. Table 5 shows the percentage of the respondents who had at least one longer stay in another European country before meeting their partner and the respective reasons for the stays. Natives with a European partner have lived in another European country more often before meeting this partner. Both stays for

Table 4 Mobility: diversity of European countries visited during short stays abroad, percentages in columns

	Belgium		The Netherlands		Switzerland		Total	
	Intermarriage		Intermarriage		Intermarriage		Intermarriage	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
As a child								
Few countries in Europe	45.0	44.5	30.3	32.2	41.3	40.5	39.8	38.8
Many countries, mainly Europe	42.0	36.7	52.7	50.2	31.3	30.4	37.0	38.9
Many countries and continents	13.0	18.8	17.0	17.6	27.4	29.1	23.2	22.3
As an adult								
Few countries in Europe	51.9	28.9	31.9	17.2	21.1	14.5	28.0	19.5
Many countries, mainly Europe	32.1	49.1	48.4	49.0	43.7	42.2	42.7	46.5
Many countries and continents	16.1	22.0	19.7	33.7	35.2	43.3	29.3	34.0

Source: Belgian, Dutch and Swiss EUMARR survey 2012, results from cluster analyses

Table 5 Mobility: long stays abroad in another European country and reasons for at least one long stay abroad,[a] in percentages

	Belgium		The Netherlands		Switzerland		Total	
	Intermarriage		Intermarriage		Intermarriage		Intermarriage	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
At least one stay abroad (% in col.)	20.4	31.7	16.5	34.9	23.6	32.9	21.8	33.2
Work	5.6	10.1	3.2	10.7	5.1	10.4	4.8	10.4
Education	8.2	20.2	10.1	23.8	15.2	21.8	13.1	22.0
Parental decision	5.6	2.8	2.7	1.9	1.5	2.8	2.4	2.5
Other reason	3.7	4.1	1.6	2.7	4.2	4.5	3.7	3.8
N	162	218	188	261	664	289	1,014	768

Source: Belgian, Dutch and Swiss EUMARR survey 2012

[a] Each stay in a European country counted separately but the same reason is counted only once

work and stays for education seem to influence partner choice, at least at this descriptive level. 10 % of the natives in an intra-European couple spent some time in a foreign European country for work as compared with 5 % of the natives in a native couple. European stays for education are also more common among the intermarried natives than among those that married a native partner (respectively, 22 and 13 %).

The descriptive results suggest that mobility indeed plays a role in the formation of a partnership with another European. In the next step, we examine whether the results also hold when several factors are controlled for.

To study the effects of mobility on the probability of engaging in an intra-European partnership, a binary logistic regression is applied. Table 6 presents the probability for a native to have a foreign-born European partner (vs. a native partner). The independent variables are introduced stepwise in the models. For the comparison of the nested models, we present the average marginal effects (AME) and their 95 % confidence intervals (CI). The AME values indicate the average change of the independent variable on the probabilities of intermarriage (Cameron and Trivedi 2010, p. 343f).[9] In each of the four models, we control for country, given the differences in the sample composition. We also control for age, although the age range in our sample is rather small: 30–45 years, gender and migration background.

Our first model introduces all variables except the mobility variables. Women tend to have a much lower probability for intermarriage as compared with men, on average almost 11 % points lower.[10] For natives with a migration background, we find a negative effect: They are less prone to enter into a relationship with a foreign

[9] For continuous variables, the marginal effect indicates to what extent the probability of $Y = 1$ increases if x increases one unit. For dichotomous variables, the marginal effect indicates the average effect of x at a discrete change from 0 to 1.

[10] This result is rather unexpected as intermarriage is usually found to be more likely among native women than among native men (e.g. Kalmijn 1998, p. 412). An explanation might lie in the composition of our sample with respect to the involved nationalities as well as to the average high level of education and the urban context.

Table 6 Binary logistic regression of natives' probability to have a partner from another European country (vs. a native) in Belgium, The Netherlands and Switzerland

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	AME	CI	AME	CI	AME	CI	AME	CI
Country (Rf. CH)								
Belgium	0.26***	[0.20, 0.32]	0.29***	[0.23, 0.35]	0.29***	[0.23, 0.35]	0.26***	[0.21, 0.32]
The Netherlands	0.24***	[0.18, 0.30]	0.26***	[0.21, 0.32]	0.26***	[0.20, 0.32]	0.18***	[0.13, 0.24]
Age	−0.00	[−0.01, 0.00]	−0.00	[−0.01, 0.00]	−0.00	[−0.01, 0.00]	−0.00	[−0.01, 0.00]
Gender (Rf. male)	−0.11***	[−0.15, −0.06]	−0.10***	[−0.14, −0.05]	−0.10***	[−0.15, −0.06]	−0.07**	[−0.11, −0.03]
Migration background (Rf. no.)								
Yes	−0.13***	[−0.19, −0.08]	−0.12***	[−0.18, −0.07]	−0.12***	[−0.18, −0.07]	−0.09***	[−0.14, −0.04]
Education (Rf. high)								
Low	−0.04	[−0.11, 0.02]	−0.02	[−0.09, 0.05]	−0.01	[−0.07, 0.06]	0.00	[−0.06, 0.07]
Middle	−0.05	[−0.11, 0.01]	−0.04	[−0.10, 0.02]	−0.03	[−0.09, 0.03]	−0.03	[−0.08, 0.02]
Highest	0.01	[−0.07, 0.09]	0.01	[−0.07, 0.09]	0.02	[−0.06, 0.09]	0.02	[−0.06, 0.09]
Languages								
Multilingual raised	0.09**	[0.03, 0.16]	0.09**	[0.03, 0.16]	0.10**	[0.03, 0.16]	0.07*	[0.01, 0.13]
No. of foreign lang.	0.05***	[0.03, 0.07]	0.04***	[0.02, 0.07]	0.03**	[0.01, 0.06]	0.03**	[0.01, 0.05]
Short stays as child (Rf. few countries in Europe)								
Many countries, m. Europe			−0.05*	[−0.10, −0.00]	−0.05*	[−0.10, −0.00]	−0.05*	[−0.09, −0.00]
Many countries and continents			−0.02	[−0.08, 0.04]	−0.02	[−0.08, 0.04]	−0.03	[−0.08, 0.03]
Short stays as adult (Rf. few countries in Europe)								
Many countries, m. Europe			0.11***	[0.05, 0.16]	0.10***	[0.04, 0.15]	0.09***	[0.03, 0.14]
Many countries and continents			0.15***	[0.08, 0.21]	0.13***	[0.07, 0.19]	0.11***	[0.05, 0.17]
Long stays abroad in Europe								
For work					0.13**	[0.04, 0.22]	0.05	[−0.04, 0.13]
For educational reasons					0.12***	[0.06, 0.18]	0.07*	[0.01, 0.13]

Table 6 continued

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	AME	CI	AME	CI	AME	CI	AME	CI
For other reasons					−0.02	[−0.11, 0.07]	−0.06	[−0.14, 0.02]
Meeting (Rf. in CoR/offline)								
Not in CoR							0.51***	[0.46, 0.56]
Online							0.18***	[0.09, 0.27]
Statistics								
χ^2	214.45		238.41		265.57		532.75	
Pseudo r^2	0.09		0.10		0.11		0.22	
AIC	2243.85		2227.90		2206.74		1943.56	
BIC	2304.20		2310.19		2305.48		2053.27	
N	1,782		1,782		1,782		1,782	

Source: Belgian, Dutch and Swiss EUMARR survey 2012

Rf. reference category, *CH* Switzerland, *m. Europe* mainly in Europe, *CoR* country of residence

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

European partner. The effect is pronounced when linguistic capital is controlled for. In regard to education, we observe a slightly significant effect (results not reported), but this positive effect of education on intermarriage to another European partner disappears when we account for the number of foreign languages spoken. The linguistic measures, being brought up multilingual and speaking multiple foreign languages, both reveal the assumed positive effect on intermarriage. Every foreign language an individual speaks fluently before meeting his/her partner increases the chance of a foreign European partner by an average of 5 % points. English proficiency had the expected positive effect, too. Results are not reported as almost everyone who spoke at least one foreign language was proficient in English (94 %), so both variables could not be added in one model. The number of languages was given primacy as it had more explanatory power.

In model 2, we add the two measures referring to short stays abroad, derived from cluster analyses: short stays as a child (before the age of 16) and short stays as an adult (after the age of 16 until living with the actual partner). The first variable tests the 'socialization effect,' while the effect of the second variable is assumed to rest more on the opportunity structure. Short-term mobility as a child seems to have only a small effect, insofar that natives who have visited many countries as a child, although mainly within Europe, have a lower probability to enter a relationship with a foreign European partner, after controlling for the other variables. Accordingly, a 'socialization effect' cannot be observed in different nations. The strongest effect of short stays can be found for mobility at a later age. There we find that being more mobile, especially if the mobility is more diverse (i.e., more countries and more visited regions in the world, traveling outside Europe), increases the chance of finding a partner born in another EU country. An increase in the probability of, on average, 15 % points can be found for natives who visited many countries in Europe and many other continents as well, compared with natives who have had only a low mobility range. This effect should result primarily from the changed opportunity structure during travels abroad.

Model 3 adds variables referring to long stays abroad. Long stays abroad also represent a different and probably more diverse set of potential partners. Again, strong, significant, positive effects are found: A stay abroad for educational or work-related reasons tends to positively increase the chances for intermarriage. Both seem to be equally important. The effect of the 'other' category does not appear significant, meaning that on average there is no difference between those who have lived in another European country for reasons not related to work or study and those who have not lived in another European country at all. We also tested for the number of long stays abroad in European countries (not reported in the table). Here, we find an average marginal effect of 7, i.e., every stay abroad heightens the probability of finding a foreign European partner by 7 % points. Due to collinearity issues, we could not include both the number of long stays abroad and the main reasons for doing so in the model.

In the last model (4), we account for the place where the partners met for the first time. This variable is not introduced here as an explanatory variable in the prediction of intermarriage, as of course meeting place is closely associated with partner choice. Rather, it must be considered as an intermediary variable that was

added in this last model to better understand how mobility works in fostering intermarriage. Important here is that when we introduce this variable, it strongly reduces the effect of long stays, even more so for work than for study. This implies that the long stays for work in another European country mainly create good opportunities for meeting a future partner in this foreign country; for short stays and long stays for education, on the other hand, it also opens up opportunities for entering into a relationship with a foreign partner in the traveler's own country of residence later on. After all, the variable clearly demonstrates how important mobility is for partnership formation: Individuals who met their partners abroad, i.e., not in the country of residence, are—on average—51 % points more likely to end up in an intermarriage with another European. Moreover, we also find that natives who met their partner online have a markedly increased chance of engaging in an intermarriage.

8 Summary and Discussion

Mobility is one of the keywords in the European story. The goal of this paper has been to study how mobility experiences during childhood and early adulthood can influence intermarriage, assuming that this in the long term would result in a more integrated, transnational Europe. Therefore, we made use of the EUMARR data, providing unique data to get a better insight into the phenomenon of intermarriage and the social context in which this takes place. The data allow us to study a specific aspect of the problem, namely how previous mobility experiences influence the choice of native men and women for either a foreign-born European partner or a native-born partner. Based on the theoretical framework that was elaborated in the beginning of this paper, a number of hypotheses were formulated and then tested in the results section.

Our first hypothesis predicted that education would be positively associated with the probability of an intra-European binational marriage (H_1). This hypothesis was not supported. We found no significant differences between the educational levels—at least not after accounting for the number of languages spoken. This is not surprising as our sample contains essentially highly educated people, and within this group, language proficiency is often high, in contrast to the less-educated group.

Based on the literature, we also assumed an influence of linguistic capital. It is argued that speaking multiple languages helps to overcome both linguistic and cultural barriers and thereby increases the chance of a binational intra-European partnership (versus a mono-national partnership) (H_2). Three sub-hypotheses were formulated regarding the probability of a European intermarriage: one specifying a positive effect for being raised bilingual (H_{2a}), one for speaking a larger number of foreign languages (H_{2b}) and the last one referring to the importance of English. All sub-hypotheses, and thereby also hypothesis 2, were confirmed. Linguistic capital, indeed, seems to positively influence the probability of intermarriage (versus a partnership to a native). The strongest effect was found for being raised multilingual, which might indicate the advantage of a shared mother tongue for building a relationship.

The third set of hypotheses relates to the main focus of our paper. Hypothesis 3 states that we expect higher levels of mobility prior to the relationship with the current partner to have a positive effect on the probability of an intra-European partnership rather than a native partnership. Several theoretical reasons were given for this effect: increased opportunities to meet a partner with a different nationality, the development of more open-minded attitudes toward people with culturally different backgrounds and, with a special reference to mobility within Europe, increased identification with Europe. Four sub-hypotheses were differentiated, each referring to a specific kind or aspect of mobility. H_{3a} states a higher level of mobility during childhood positively influences the probability of a binational rather than a native partnership. H_{3b} refers to the same effect for short-term mobility in (early) adulthood. In our analyses, H_{3a} is falsified, while we find empirical evidence for H_{3b}. This suggests that short stays abroad (and more precisely the diversity in places) have a positive influence on the probability of intermarriage but that these are significant mainly when experienced during adulthood, and not as a child. During this period in life (after leaving the nest and before meeting the partner), choices for short trip destinations are less influenced by third parties and made more consciously, which might also reveal a more cosmopolitan lifestyle. Socialization does not seem to be the central underlying mechanism, except that it might perhaps exert a secondary influence on the choices for destinations later in life.[11] More research is needed to understand this process. Furthermore, we took into account long stays in other European countries. We hypothesized that the more long stays abroad in other European countries individuals experienced during their life, the higher the probability they would intermarry with a European rather than a native partner (H_{3c}). Moreover, we expected especially long stays related to educational or occupational reasons to have a positive effect on the formation of intra-European partnerships because schools, universities and work places are known to be effective marriage markets (H_{3d}). Based on our analysis, we can confirm the positive influence of long stays abroad, for number of stays as well as for both school and work motives. Adding meeting place to the analysis also shows that long stays for work in other European countries foster intra-European partnership mainly by opening up a foreign marriage market to the native mobile person, i.e., by creating opportunities to meet potential partners abroad. This is also the case for long stays for study motives; however, these kinds of experiences, very much stimulated by current EU policies through programs within the framework of Erasmus Plus, also seem to open other paths to intermarriage, both in the local and in the foreign marriage market. This might be an indication that these experiences also have a lasting effect on preferences in addition to opportunity structures.

In the fourth and fifth hypotheses, we assumed that the meeting place is a central parameter in explaining the opportunity for the formation of an intra-European partnership. We expected that such a relationship would be more likely if the couple had not met in the country of residence of the respondent (H_4). Furthermore, a first meeting on the Internet

[11] However, we did not account for the kind of the trips, which could matter, too. Vacations in resorts isolated from the everyday life of the native residents might be less influential than firsthand experiences.

would also make a foreign European partner (versus a native partner) more likely (H_5). For both H_4 and H_5, very strong and significant effects were found in the analysis.

This study has aimed to contribute to the literature on intermarriage and more specifically intermarriage in the European context. We have focused on the potential effect of the acquired capital of individuals concerning mobility, combined with other factors such as cultural background and language skills. The main idea was that individuals with more diverse mobility experiences have an increased probability to intermarry with a European partner rather than to marry a native partner. On the one hand, this can be established through the opportunity structure and a heightened chance to meet other Europeans. On the other hand, the hypothesis rests on the assumption that mobility leads to more openness toward and more familiarity with other cultures. In our analyses, we found evidence for both these processes. As a result of this study, we conclude that European mobility plays an important role in the formation of intra-European partnerships. This effect mainly builds on the opportunities to meet a partner of another nationality. Natives in intra-European partnerships have often met their partner abroad. Also the accumulated mobility capital in adulthood is of importance. The positive effect of linguistic capital supports this conclusion. Other theoretical mechanisms, such as socialization through extensive traveling in childhood, do not get much empirical support.

Some limitations of this study should be discussed. First, a possible effect of self-selection could not be controlled for with the data at hand: People who travel abroad more often or who stay abroad for longer periods of time might be more open-minded even before traveling so that the causal mechanism is not mobility but, for instance, some individual predisposition. Further research has to clarify whether self-selection reduces the effect of mobility on intermarriage. Undoubtedly, the effect of mobility will not vanish as a great deal of it results from the changed opportunity structure, i.e., from meeting the partner abroad. In that respect, the EU policy of fostering intra-European mobility is a useful tool for enhancing European integration through the creation of opportunities for different Europeans to meet. Second, the demonstrated effect of mobility on intermarriage refers to those who do find a (European or native) partner. With the data at hand, we are not able to cancel out the possibility that mobile persons might also have a heightened chance of staying without a partner or having a less stable partnership. In this case, mobility might even result in less intra-European intermarriage overall (in terms of absolute numbers). Further research could follow up the questions whether mobility impedes the search for a partner and increases the risk of staying alone or breaking up with a partner. Another promising alley for further research concerns the individual motives for mobility. Certain preferences could foster travels or stays in other countries or at least the choice of the respective country. The positive effect of Internet dating might provide some support for this suggestion.

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